



A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO THE 41ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
(Including Agoura, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Encino, Hidden Hills, Lake Sherwood, Malibu, Oak Park, Pacific Palisades, Port Hueneme, South Oxnard, Santa Monica, Tarzana, Topanga, Westlake Village, and Woodland Hills)

January 2007

Welcome ...



... to the first edition of my monthly e-mail newsletter. As the 2007–08 legislative session in Sacramento begins, I hope that this newsletter will serve as an effective link with you, the people who I am so honored to be representing in the State Assembly. The swearing-in ceremony on December 4 in our magnificent state Capitol was both moving and exciting. I was proud to share the occasion with my two children, and I am now eager to get to work on behalf of our wonderful District.

In this newsletter, I'll be updating you on legislation, budget matters, and other issues as they move through the State Legislature. I'll also be letting you know what's happening in and around the beautiful and very diverse 41st Assembly District.

Mostly, however, in order to be as effective as possible, I need to hear what issues are important to you. **If you have a suggestion for possible legislation, please let me know quickly** since I am now reviewing the many ideas that have already been submitted for consideration. E-mail to:

assemblymember.brownley@assembly.ca.gov.

Introducing My Staff

CAPITOL OFFICE

- **Stephanie Burri, Chief of Staff**

Stephanie graduated from CSU Sacramento with a degree in Government and has worked in and around the Capitol for 10 years, including for former Senator Jim Costa, current State Senator Pat Wiggins, and most recently former Assemblymember Wilma Chan as Capitol Director. Her areas of expertise are health care, transportation, public safety, and natural resources.

- **Julie Gallagher, Legislative Director**

Julie has worked for the Assembly for the past seven years as Legislative Director for current State Senator Pat Wiggins and former Assemblymember Wilma Chan. She has a degree in Government from CSU Sacramento. Her areas of expertise range from K-12 education to environmental health and protection.

- **Guy Strahl, Legislative Aide**

Guy has worked for the Assembly for the past four years, including with former Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg. His expertise includes higher education and public safety. Guy graduated from UC Davis, and volunteers in youth leadership conferences, and is active in the LGBT, API, and Latino communities.

- **Elizabeth Ziebron, Executive Assistant**

Elizabeth interned for the late Congressman Robert Matsui in Washington, D.C., and just finished a two-year commitment with the Phil Angelides gubernatorial campaign handling his outreach, event planning, and advance. She graduated from UC Davis with a double major in international relations and history.

DISTRICT OFFICE

- **Louise Rishoff, District Director**

Louise was District Director for Assemblymember Pavley from 2000–2006. Before making a career change to go to work for the State Assembly, she spent 21 years practicing law, and served for 16 years as a Planning Commissioner, Councilmember, and Mayor of the City of Agoura Hills. Louise specializes in issues related to the environment and natural resources.

- **Timothy Lippman, Senior Assistant**

Timothy, too, came from Assemblymember Pavley's District staff, but brings wide experience from his 13+ years with the California Assembly. In the Capitol, he worked for Assemblymembers Pat Wiggins, Diane Martinez, and Susan Davis. He also staffed the Assembly Consumer Protection and Public Safety Committees.

- **Jesse Switzer, Field Representative**

Jesse graduated from UCLA in 2004 with a BA in Musicology. He has worked for various political campaigns, including the 2004 presidential campaign and running the field operation for my 2006 Assembly race. Last year, Jesse oversaw the successful passage of the Santa Monica–Malibu school bond. His areas include civil rights and labor.

Governor Releases Proposed Budget



Beginning the state's budget process, on January 10, Governor Schwarzenegger released his proposed \$143 billion 2007–08 budget. The next step is line-by-line, category-by-category review over the upcoming months by the relevant Assembly and State Senate budget committees and sub-committees. As Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education, I will be especially focused on ensuring that education this year is fully funded, and that we begin to lay the foundation to invest, and subsequently increase, the necessary funding to restore California's schools back to being a model for the nation. The final budget bill must be passed by a bipartisan 2/3 supermajority vote of both the Assembly and the State Senate by midnight on June 30, after which it will go back to the Governor for his signature.

In general, the proposed budget increases state spending by just one percent. It relies on a projection of 7% growth, assumes \$500 million in revenue from Indian gaming compacts that the Legislature refused to ratify last year, and contains substantial new borrowing. It also proposes a \$600 million early repayment of the voter-approved 2004 deficit repayment bonds (while cutting assistance to underprivileged children), and diverts \$1.1 billion of gas tax revenues away from public transportation.

Here are a few of the highlights.

EDUCATION

- **K–12** – Increases Proposition 98 funding by \$1.4 billion (+2.9%), and meets the Prop. 98 minimum funding guarantee. Funds COLA at 4.04% for K–12, including discretionary funds and categorical programs. It does not provide any growth funding.
- **University of California** – Increases basic budget support by \$116.7 million (+4%). Proposes an increase in student fees by 7%. The UC Board of Regents will be considering the proposed increase at their March meeting.
- **California State University** – Increases basic budget support by \$108.9 million. Proposes an increase in student fees by 10%. The CSU Board of Trustees will be considering the proposed increase at their March meeting.
- **California Community Colleges** – Increases basic budget support by \$109 million (+2%) for enrollment growth to fund an additional 23,000 full-time equivalent positions.

Overall K–12 education funding is increased by 1.2%.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Proposition 42** -- Full funding, plus required repayment of past suspensions. Total of \$1.5 billion
- **2006 Proposition 1B bonds** - \$523 million in current year funding and \$2.8 billion in 2007-08 budget year. This would include \$600 million split evenly between cities and counties for local road projects and \$600 million for local transit.
- **Cuts \$627 million of transportation funding** and replaces it with \$627 million of public transit financing. The Governor proposes to adjust the Prop. 98 education guarantee downward, accordingly.
- **Diverts \$1.1 billion** from public transportation to cover the costs of school bus services, developmentally disabled transportation, and repayment of General Obligation Bond debt.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **2006 Prop. 1C housing bonds** - \$658 million for projects like affordable home ownership and rental housing, grants to cities and counties for deferred-payment mortgage loans, and transit-oriented development of housing projects near transit stations.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION / NATURAL RESOURCES

- **\$6 billion in proposed new bonds** -- \$4 billion for new reservoirs, \$500,000 for groundwater storage, \$1 billion for Delta restructuring projects, \$500,000 for water stewardship and conservation.
- **\$667 million from existing bonds (Props. 1E, 84, 13, and AB 142)** for repair of levees, local flood control, and flood management projects.
- **\$8.8 million in Prop. 84 funds for Clean Beaches Grants** - Projects include upgrading septic systems, stormwater pollution programs, and clean beach projects in Santa Monica. Prop. 84 specifies that 20% of clean beach funds be allocated to the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, of which I am a legislative member.
- **\$17 million in Prop. 84 funds to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy** - It also increases their Support Budget to \$1.194 million.

HEALTH SERVICES

This is the elephant in the room this year. How will our state deliver affordable health care to the millions of uninsured Californians, including over 700,000 uninsured children. The Governor laid out his general proposal in his State of the State address, which could include forcing people to buy health insurance. Several pieces of legislation with other approaches have already been introduced in the Assembly and Senate, and Senator Sheila Kuehl, an expert and leader in the Legislature on health care, will be continuing her efforts on her universal single-payer plan. Health care is a growing cost for the state, with a population that is also growing by 500,000 new Californians every year. It is going to be an enormous challenge.

MORE DEBT?

Following on the successful \$37.3 billion in infrastructure bonds passed by the voters last November, the Governor has now called for an additional \$29.4 billion in new bonds for dams, schools, and courthouses, plus \$13.9 billion in revenue bonds for prisons, water storage and smaller items. How much debt should we and can we responsibly assume as we must look to the longer term in our budget planning?

Here are just a few questions that the Legislature will have to answer:

- Should we be making cuts in assistance to underprivileged children in order to add a \$600 million early repayment on certain bonds over and above the scheduled \$2.5 billion bond repayment?
- Should Proposition 98 education funds be shifted to purposes historically paid from the General Fund, as opposed to using them for additional classrooms, more school counselors, programs to reduce dropout rates, etc.?
- Should we be diverting fluctuating gas tax revenues intended for public transportation, to school and transit districts to use for existing programs that pay for school buses and shuttle services for the developmentally disabled?
- How do we address dangerous overcrowding in state prisons, including compliance with a Federal court order that the state must come up with a plan to reduce overcrowding by June 4 or face a statewide prison population cap?
- What steps can we take toward insuring all Californians, including relieving the heavy burdens on emergency rooms that are serving as the costly health care of last resort for hundreds of thousands of working families and their children?

Legislative Analyst's Office Expresses Concerns

In addition to policy questions such as these, there are structural problems in the Governor's proposed budget which have been raised by California's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst, Elizabeth Hill. Here are a few comments from her "Overview of the Governor's Budget." The entire document can be read on the LAO's website at www.lao.ca.gov.

"We believe that the budget relies on optimistic assumptions in a number of areas. While any budget is subject to risks and uncertainties, we believe that the number and magnitude of these risks is unusually high in the current plan...."

"There are a number of areas where the budget's estimates of revenue increases or spending reductions resulting from its proposals are optimistic. For example, we believe that the additional revenues that would result from the Governor's proposed amendments to certain tribal gambling compacts are overstated by \$300 million. Similarly, the availability of PTA funds to support added home-to-school transportation costs over time will depend in part on future gas prices. For instance, if prices fall, the amount of funds to the PTA could decline significantly.... Finally, the budget includes \$100 million of unspecified savings in state operations."

LAO concludes with cautionary advice to the Legislature.

"The downside risks in this budget could easily exceed the \$2.1 billion reserve budgeted for 2007-08. It is also important to remember that the state continues to face a significant ongoing structural shortfall in its budget, as well as pressures related to unfunded retiree health care costs and potential additional costs to the state's correctional health care system. In view of these factors, it will be important that the Legislature develop a more realistic budget which includes alternative budgetary solutions and avoids raising ongoing commitments (absent identified funding to pay for them.)"

Stay tuned.

Know a student with an “inner spark”?

The California State Summer School for the Arts (*INNERSPARK*) is looking for the most talented high-school-aged visual, literary, media, and performing artists in California. Those who are selected will attend one of the country’s premier summer arts institutes on the California Institute of the Arts campus in Valencia from July 14 – August 11.

INNERSPARK is a unique opportunity for young people to spend four weeks studying and working with professional artists, writers, and performers of national stature. In addition, the talented teens who successfully complete the program will also receive three units of California State University course credit. Families that have the means to pay will be charged a comprehensive fee of \$1,350 for room, board, and tuition. Scholarships are also available to insure that the *INNERSPARK* opportunity is available to the most deserving teens regardless of their economic status.

Application deadline is February 28, 2007. Call my District Office to request application materials, or you can access information and applications at www.innerspark.us.

How about a college graduate looking for a unique public policy experience?

The Center for California Studies at California State University Sacramento is already looking for Fellows for their class of 2007–08. These are nationally-recognized public policy fellowships offering college grads the experience of a lifetime in policy making and development with California state government. Fellows work for 11 months as full-time paid policy assistants to members of the California Assembly, Senate, legislative committees, senior executive branch staff, court officials, and other top ranking government officials. They help draft and analyze legislation, answer constituent inquiries, write speeches, conduct policy briefings, and much more, thus gaining first-hand experience in governing the most diverse state in the nation.

The only prerequisite for the class of 2007–08 is a four-year college degree by September 2007. Individuals with advanced degrees or mid-career professionals are encouraged to apply.

Applications must be postmarked on or before February 28, 2007. More information and application forms can also be obtained online at <http://www.csus.edu/calst/programs/>. Or phone Tim Hodson, Executive Director of the Center at (916) 278-6906. Informational brochures by mail are available on request from my District Office.

District News...

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHANNEL ISLANDS



On December 13, I had a very interesting introductory meeting with Dr. Richard Rush, President of CSUCI, and Marty De Las Cobos, Vice President for University Advancement, followed by a tour of their beautiful Mission-style campus. CSUCI is the first four-year college in the 41st AD and Ventura County, and Dr. Rush and his staff have a very aggressive and exciting vision for the University's future.

The meeting began with a presentation by film and stage actress Linda Purl, who is the moving force behind what will be the annual Rubicon International Theatre Festival which will make its home in Ventura County. Rubicon is contemplated to be a "fusion of distinguished international theatre productions and new works." There is nothing in the U.S. comparable to what Rubicon will be offering, with only Spoleto in Italy for opera and Lincoln Center as a multi-disciplinary center. I am proud to have been invited to be an Honorary Trustee of this wonderful new cultural venture, with its inaugural season planned for 2008.

FIRE HITS MALIBU. AGAIN

Fanned by raging Santa Ana winds that roared down Malibu Canyon Road like a blast furnace, at 5:00 p.m. on January 8, a small brush fire that began at Bluffs Park within just minutes ignited oceanfront homes along Malibu Road into a wall of flame. Proactive placement of red-flag-condition strike teams in the area meant that firefighters began their response almost immediately, which proved to be critical. Although five homes burned to the ground and six others were seriously damaged, there were no losses of life and only one reported injury.

Firefighters from the Los Angeles County Fire Department, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and mutual aid from California State Parks, all performed in a truly heroic manner, and deserve enormous credit and our gratitude. Fires are nothing new to Malibu, and it is a resilient city. I will do whatever I can at the state level to help Malibu rebound from this one.

FREE CASH FOR COLLEGE

One of the best kept secrets in California is the CalGrant program. It's money that does not have to be repaid, guaranteed. Graduating high school seniors or recent grads, who meet academic, financial, and other simple eligibility requirements, simply have to submit two forms by March 2, 2007, and they will receive a CalGrant.

There are two cash-for-college workshops being held on Saturday, February 10, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the 41st Assembly District, where assistance will be available to help you apply. Each workshop begins on the hour at:

- **Palisades Charter High School**, 15777 Bowdoin Street, Pacific Palisades
- **Santa Monica High School**, 601 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica

To find other cash-for-college workshops, go to www.lacashforcollege.org, www.calgrants.org. Or phone 888-CA-GRANT. CalGrants can provide up to \$9,700 a year at any qualifying college or technical school in California.

FREE CAR SEAT INSPECTIONS BY CHP

Under current law, children under age 6 or under 60 pounds riding in cars must be secured in safety car seats. The majority of those car seats, however, have been found to be outdated, and/or improperly used or secured.

On **Wednesday, Feb. 14**, the CHP will be doing no-cost car seat inspections at the Babies R'Us store in Calabasas, 23741 Calabasas Road, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This is a great chance to be sure that when you put your child into a car seat, that your child is truly safe.

CITY OF CALABASAS LAUNCHES NEW CIVIC CENTER



On January 6, I joined the Calabasas City Council and a large group of excited residents and dignitaries at the groundbreaking for their long-awaited new civic center and library. What was expected to be a blustery day, turned out to be one of the warmest and sunniest days of winter.

Included in the Center will be a 27,700 sq.ft. city hall, a 25,700 sq.ft. library, an assembly hall, outdoor amphitheater, and a public plaza with a rose garden, olive grove, and strolling paths. Using sustainable building practices, the Center will qualify for the coveted Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, demonstrating the City's commitment to environmental stewardship. Congratulations to Calabasas on what will be a wonderful new heart of their city.

Committee and Legislative Appointments

Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2 on Education

Aging and Long-Term Care

Budget

Budget Subcommittee #3 on Resources

Education

Natural Resources

Legislative Liaison, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

HOW TO REACH ME:

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